

APRIL MEETING

The Royal Marines Heritage Trails - Deal and Walmer

A talk by Bill Butler - Reported by Alan Lee

Bill opened his presentation by stating that his family background in the military had led him away from the forces with all of the drill and discipline. He left school in the mid 60's with varied career opportunities: Royal Marines Band service, trainee reporter, police cadet etc. Eventually he settled on teaching and since moving to SE Kent has mainly worked for KCC Education and Youth Services. He has also developed an interest in sound techniques and supporting local drama and school productions.

Bill is the founding trustee member of a new charity in Deal "The Royal Marines Heritage Trails - Deal and Walmer". This has led to a tremendous amount of extra, but enjoyable, work.

The trails are well on the way to being delivered. Bill said that alternative name could have been "Silius Titus - Green Berets and all that Jazz"

Silius Titus - In February 1665 he was "Groom of the Bedchamber" to Charles II and Keeper of Deal Castle. This was when the Yellow Company of the Duke of York and Albany's Maritime Regiment moved to Deal. Just four months after they were founded, on 28th October 1664. They were the first official unit of the English Naval Infantry and would soon become known as the Admiral's

Regiment, later they would become the Royal Marines. Silius Titus was also the Captain of a Company in the Admiral's Regiment (1666). They were raised to counter the threat from the Dutch. The Yellow Company were moved to Deal as there was a huge Royal Naval Yard there and there were issues with the local fishermen and the many smugglers.

The Green Berets - Official headdress of the British Commandos of the Second World War. It is still worn by members of the Royal Marines after passing the Commando Course.

And All That Jazz - Quite simply "the finest band service in the world". The Royal Marine Depot Band arrived in 1891, The Royal Navy School of Music in 1930 followed by the Royal Marines School of Music in 1950.



*Soldier of Duke of York and Albany's Maritime Regiment of Foot 1664
Tunic was mainly Yellow
Artist Charles Stadden*

There has been 352 years of shared heritage with "the Corps" and their forebear regiments. Some 554,554 recruits have passed through the training depot at Deal along with thousands of young people who have trained as Royal Marine Musicians.

Before the arrival of the Duke of York and Albany's Maritime Regiment the Deal Navy Yard looked after vessels at anchorage off the Downs

between Deal and the Goodwin Sands. The 15th Light Dragoons, the Royal Artillery, cavalry and infantry regiments occupied various barracks. Deal was home to the "Blockade Men" the forerunners of the Coastguard Service.

In 1809 lightning struck the Royal Naval Hospital causing severe damage. This site would become The East Barracks. In 1812 the New Naval Hospital, with a clock tower, was built. This later became the Royal Marines School of Music. In 1861 the "Deal Royal Marines School of Music" was formed and in 1869 and occupied the existing barracks in Deal. 1871 the Royal Marines Physical Training School introduced with two gymnasiums. The Old Gymnasium is on the trail. 1892 a sea water swimming pool was built. Following the sinking of HMS Victoria, in 1893 with the loss of 180 lives, all Royal Marines had to be able to swim.

At the onset of WWI the Royal Naval Division was encamped locally. Christmas 1914 Rupert Brooke, naval officer and war poet, visited Walmer Castle. He was to die on route to Gallipoli on 23rd April 1915 after contracting pneumonia from an infected mosquito bite.

The RM Light Infantry and RM Artillery formed the 4th Battalion for the Zeebrugge Raid on St Georges Day, 23rd April 1918. King George V visited the depot and inaugurated the "Kings Squad", the top squad, and the "Kings Badge-Man", the top recruit in the top squad.

Eight Victoria Crosses were won during the "Raid". So many men, both sailors and marines so distinguished themselves in battle that a ballot was used to make the awards for bravery. For the 4th Battalion Royal Marines 32 men were entered into the ballot

for the Victoria Cross. The rules were not strictly adhered to as the ballot contained both Officers and Men, thus contravening Rule 13. The ballot, by voting slips, was held on the 26th April on the parade ground at the Royal Marine Depot, Deal. The VCs being awarded to Sergeant Norman Finch with 91 votes and Captain Edward Bamford with 34 votes [then changed to 64]. The reasons for the alterations are not explained. All Royal Marine VC holders are remembered by streets being named after them at the Old Infirmary Barracks and at South Barracks.

There have been a number of Royal and high powered visits over the years including Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother and HRH, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

Local volunteer trail guides will be recruited to promote the trails and to give guided tours. A curriculum project is being developed to include primary schools in Deal, Temple Ewell and St Margaret's with secondary schools throughout Dover District also being included.

The Royal Marine Heritage Trails – Deal and Walmer will be launched on 23rd April 2018 in both Deal and Dover in conjunction with the 100th Zeebrugge Day commemoration. The memorial to the fallen and the Zeebrugge Bell will be included in the trail.



Royal Marines Band - Strand Palais Dance Hall, Walmer, Kent